"To promote Christian ideals for agriculture and rural life; to interpret the spiritual and religious values ch inhere in the processes of agriculture and the relationships of rural life; to magnify and dignify the al church; to provide a means of fellowship and cooperation among rural agencies: *Toward a Christian cal Civilization.*"

The Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletin

Published by The Christian Rural Fellowship, Room 1111, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

mber 83 June, 1943

The Rural Church and Rural Life in the South*

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THE RURAL CHURCH

Present Status

The church, an essential agency.--The church is an essential agency in the rebuilding of rural America. Improved physical standards of life are meaningless except as they contribute to the satisfaction of the deeper longings and needs of human life. The new rural movement must be at heart spiritual.

A survey of the present status of the rural church includes a recognition of the contribution of its ministry to the deep spiritual needs of rural people. The church brings the great beliefs of the Christian faith to bear directly on the problems of rural life. Its message and program undergird life and give it stability. It challenges rural people to develop every physical resource and human talent to the highest degree of usefulness possible. It comforts persons in their sorrow; it makes their joys complete. It gives the qualitative element to life, without which living is mere existence.

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*Material in this Bulletin is taken from the Report of the Southern Rural Life Conference held at Nashville, Tennessee, January 27-29, 1943, sponsored by George Peabody College for Teachers, Vanderbilt University, Scarritt College and Fisk University. The title of the Report is "The School and the Changing Pattern of Country Life." The Conference was organized about four committees: Rural Education, Agriculture and Industry, Health Education and Service, and The Rural Church. The chapter on "The Rural Church" and that part of the chapter on "Suggested Action Programs for the Improvement of Southern Rural Life" which deals with special aspects of the rural church have been included in this Bulletin. Among the general recommendations was the organization of a Southern Rural Life Council. This has been done, with representatives from the sponsoring bodies and one each from the thirteen southern states. The holding of the Conference and the setting up of a Southern Rural Life Council with means for implementing a far-reaching creative rural life program are facts of great significance. Equally significant is the recognition given to the place and importance of the rural church along with rural education, agriculture and industry, and health education and services. With its high birth-rate, what happens in the South is of national importance. The effectiveness of the rural church in the South is likewise of importance to our national religious life. Finally attention should be called to the fact that many of the present-day rural church problems in the South are found elsewhere and that many of the suggested action programs have nation-wide implication. Kind permission to reprint sections of the Report is herewith gratefully acknowledged.

Some church leaders are making statesmanlike plans for their work in the rural South. Many local churches are doing remarkably good work, and seeking in every way to meet the needs of their communities and to keep pace with the changing times.

But what of the rural church as a whole today? Is it in a position to take the vital place it ought to take in the movement for a better rural life? To a consideration of this question this chapter is directed.

Numerical strength of Protestant churches.--Dr. Mark Dawber, Secretary of the Home Missions Council, says that about three-fourths of the Protestant churches are in rural areas. A careful study revealed that in states in which the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, did most of its work, this denomination had approximately 16,000 rural churches and 1,600 urban churches. Because several are grouped under the leadership of one minister in rural areas, the number of ministers serving rural churches is not as large a proportion of the total as is true of the churches themselves. However, some 65 per cent of all of our ministers are necessarily rural. Similar figures could be quoted for most of the denominations, and there are branches of some of them that are almost wholly rural.

Dr. J. M. Ormond points out that in the fifteen southern states there are approximately 26 million rural people and that less than 10 million of these are church members; 16 million belong to no Christian church. Almost two-thirds of all of the rural people of the South are outside the church.

Financial weakness of churches.--Approximately half of the rural church members cannot be counted upon for any financial or moral support in the promotion of the church's work. The results of this situation become painfully apparent when rural church finances are studied. Dr. Edmund deS. Brunner and associates have carefully studied 140 village-centered rural communities throughout the United States. Their 1936 study showed that the total annual expenses per church in the village averaged $1,910, and in the open country $560. The figures for the South would be considerably lower and many churches would be far below this low average. These studies showed that the average contribution per member of the village churches was $8.51, while the average contribution per member of the open country churches was $3.02.

Significant studies reveal that there are still 3.2 rural churches in the South to every 1,000 people, and in the small villages 3.7 per cent. This means that the financial support available for church work in a given community is divided in such a way that no adequate and effective program can be carried on by any of the churches.

The church and soil erosion.--Factors other than location in village or open country affect the financial strength of churches. One such factor has been the subject of scientific research. Dr. T. S. Buie has determined the relationship of the grade of soil surrounding a church to its financial strength. The findings of this study have real significance for the future of the church.

Dr. Buie states that the rural churches of the Upper South Carolina Methodist Conference (222 in number) recently were classified as to the productivity of land surrounding each church. Practically all of these churches are in the Piedmont, a section where erosion is severe, and where the productivity of the land is closely related to the degree of erosion.

In this study three groupings were made: best, average, and poorest, and the average annual contribution for all purposes for each group determined from the annual conference records. There was a very definite relationship between the contribution to the church and the productivity of the land surrounding the church. The three-year average for those located on the best land was $1,135, while the amount for the average of the poorer land churches was $757 and $528 respectively. Because of the smaller number of members in the poor land churches, the decrease per capita is not as great as the decrease in total payments.

Major Problems in The Rural Church

An open-eyed approach to the church's task in rural America today will recognize at once many and exceedingly difficult problems that must be solved if the church is to make its rightful contribution to the new rural life that is being developed. While definite progress is being made toward solving some of these and promising ways of attacking others are apparent, yet some of them remain too baffling for our present knowledge. Under the following questions an effort is made to suggest most of the chief problems.

How awaken the needed vision and get statesmanlike planning?--Vision is a necessary prerequisite, the vision of a church that will put a great Christian inspiration and motivation and fellowship at the heart of the rural America that is coming into being. That vision is woefully lacking. There is vision and devotion and statesmanlike planning in the departments of rural work in mission boards and the Federal Council of Churches and in some theological seminaries. But in all except a very few cases, the enthusiastic and trained rural leaders in these departments do not actually direct the work of the churches. The church leaders are mostly urban-minded. They have no adequate plans to "occupy" the country and enable the church to fill its rightful place in the total effort for a good rural life. Country churches are left in the old helter-skelter locations that make it hard for them to serve the community and cooperate with the many helpful agencies that are at work in the country.

How secure the necessary support?--At every point the rural church and its work are hindered by lack of support--buildings, equipment, leadership, program, and position in the community. The present work of the rural churches is pitifully unsupported, but very much more and better work is called for if the church is to meet its responsibilities. Much better support by the rural people themselves should be sought.

How secure reasonably Christian economic and social conditions in the rural areas?--There cannot be a truly strong rural church in the South until economic conditions are immensely improved. The general low incomes of rural people in many areas make it impossible for them to support adequate churches. All such problems as tenancy have an intimate relation to the church and its work. Many more owners' families belong to the church and attend regularly than renters' families, and many more renters' families than sharecroppers. Shifting rural populations and migrants lose touch with organized churches.

Poverty with its attendant anxieties and disappointments dulls the spiritual sense. People who are ill-fed and sick, generally cannot respond very well to religion and they make little contribution to the church's life. The children of the very low income rural groups are not getting their share of

America's opportunities for education and other good things. And generally, the very poor do not help build progressive and cooperative communities. The church that is interested in abundant life for rural people must be deeply concerned about their economic and social needs.

How serve the whole rural populations, including the neediest and the minority groups?--Even in the country the churches are likely to be middle-class institutions, with little appeal for the very poor, the uneducated, the uncultured, and few plans for reaching them. Thousands of rural people are too far away from any church to be part of its life and the closing of open country churches leaves more and more in that condition. The great and increasing number of rural transients, especially the migrant workers, form an important unchurched element. The newer sects that do appeal to these neglected folk do not have a rich program of religious life to offer. We still do not have anything like an adequate program to reach all the rural people and there is all too little concern in the churches for the groups Jesus would have sought out, the groups who have the least and for whom the least is being done by other agencies. Like every other undertaking for the development of the South, the effort for better rural religious work must face the presence of minority racial groups.

How use all the resources of all the churches to help build the new rural America?--Denominationalism is one of our most baffling problems. In the country districts where all the interested people working together could make a church strong enough to be the determining influence in rural life, denominationalism divides the people into little groups that cannot possibly bring the mighty resources of religion to their community needs. Denominationalism cannot meet the desperate needs in many little towns today. Denominationalism greatly increases the difficulty of securing worthy church buildings, good leadership, and strong united programs of religious work. About this most urgent problem there is a vast complacency in the church.

How secure worthy buildings and equipment?--The inadequacy of the rural church building is almost everywhere apparent. With present facilities the church cannot keep pace with the development of rural life. Here we have the same problem as that of the one-room school. Uniting of churches on the basis of sociological communities may help to secure buildings capable of being used as centers of a rich and inspiring community life. But a great deal of help from the church at large is going to be necessary to make worthy church buildings possible in all the rural communities.

How carry out an adequate program?--How to get away from the traditional program that was concerned too much with the church itself to a religious work concerned primarily with people, and communities and their needs? The inherited program has been too narrow and too stereotyped; its literature is not written for the rural people; its evangelism too often does not evangelize and leaves churches no stronger and communities no better. The rural church should consecrate rural life.

How secure skilled and devoted leadership?--If the rural church is to meet even moderately well its responsibilities and opportunities in our day, it must have competently trained leaders of sound wisdom, deep devotion, and large practical ability. A marked change in ministerial training is needed to fit men for today's work in the rural churches.

The rural churches very much need a membership trained to carry on a large part of the church's work itself, with competent lay leaders in many phases of the church's life and program. Many of the most capable families and most promising young people are constantly being drained off to the cities. And there is no adequate program for developing workers to take their places.

Trends in The Rural Church

As in every other phase of life in the rural South, the church is in a period of great change. Trends and counter trends are at work simultaneously. "Ferment" rather than "flow" characterizes the situation. The war is accentuating many of the general trends of past years, reversing others, and lifting up new issues which may develop into trends in the pattern of life in the future.

Membership and attendance.--There is a trend toward the grouping of church members on the basis of economic standing. Persons of means frequently attend and have membership in town and village churches, leaving the "overall wearers" in the open country churches. This grouping of church members on the basis of economic and social distinctions also helps establish another trend--that town and village churches grow stronger financially at the expense of the open country churches.

There is a trend for church membership to follow the pattern of community organization. Membership and attendance in rural churches are also being determined by trends in the social organization of communities. With the consolidation of schools and the relative ease of reaching secondary trade centers, neighborhoods and all of their agencies are losing importance. Especially is this true for youth. The trend seems clear, that persons will attend and have membership in churches according to the pattern of social organization to which the rest of their life is geared.

The temporary restrictions on travel probably will reverse or at least arrest the trend toward attending church in town and village. That is one of the cross currents; but unless unforeseen events take place, the trend probably will be reversed when the present situation is changed.

A trend affecting membership and attendance which has been affected by the war is the migration of leaders from rural areas. In this case, the normal trend from rural to urban areas has been accentuated.

The ministry.--There is a trend toward more adequate financial support, and a more adequate staffing of the rural churches:

(1) The war has affected the ministry of the rural church. Ministers entering the chaplaincy have left vacancies; and, for the most part, this has meant that the loss finally sifted down to the rural churches. The war has accentuated the long-time trend of placing the least capable men in rural areas. The fact that rural churches have not been adequately staffed stems mainly from the facts of inadequate financial support and the stigma attached to serving in rural areas. There is a trend toward more adequate financial support of the ministry. A movement which will partially alleviate the financial situation is the practice now established in some areas to subsidize the salaries of rural ministers. Indirect subsidy has also been practiced in some instances through providing scholarships or the waiving of registration and course fees at certain short courses

and summer schools for ministers on mission charges. The use of the Lord's Acre Plan holds promise of more adequate financing of rural churches. It is a plan which makes it possible for everyone to contribute to the church. Undreamed of amounts have been raised in communities which have never before given any large amount to the support of the church.

(2) A number of organizations, some directly connected with the church and others church-related, are seeking to help establish better rural church work and to interpret to others the significance and dignity of rural life. Among these are: The Christian Rural Fellowship with thirteen branches, Agricultural Missions, Inc., Commissions on Rural Church Work in the major denominations, The National Catholic Rural Life Conference of the Catholic Church, The American Home Missions Council, Friends of the Soil (Fellowship of Southern Churchmen), and the Joint Commission on Cooperation between Theological Seminaries and Colleges of Agriculture. Other organizations which are helping in this work include the Farmers Federation with headquarters in North Carolina, the 4-H Club, and the Tenant Farmers Union. The work of these organizations will doubtlessly help to create in the minds of the people of the South a more appreciative attitude toward rural life and the work in the rural church.

(3) The trend toward better training of rural ministers has two major divisions:

1. In Colleges and Seminaries

The movement for the adequate training of rural ministers has reached back to the pre-theological course. There are now thirteen agricultural colleges offering a special "pre-theological major." Mississippi State College, College of Agriculture of the University of Tennessee, College of Agriculture of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and College of Agriculture of the University of Kentucky are the four within the Old South giving such courses. In some seminaries special courses are being offered in rural sociology, rural church administration, etc. Many plans are being used to give theological students supervised training in the field. There is a significant trend toward specialized training for the rural ministry in seminaries.

2. In-Service Training

For the better training of rural ministers already in the field numerous schools and conferences are being held. A short course (five days) for rural ministers has been held at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Tifton, Georgia, during the past two years. Similar courses have been held at the College of Agriculture of the University of Georgia, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, University of Kentucky, and Vanderbilt University (since the early 1920's). Special courses on the rural church have been offered at pastors' schools throughout the South. Among the colleges for Negroes, Tuskegee, Fort Valley, and Hampton Institute have held conferences in which Negro rural ministers have had an important part. Atlanta University has sponsored some interracial conferences in which rural ministers have had an important place.

3. Qualifying Statement

Any realistic consideration of the leadership of the rural church must reckon with the fact that a large percentage of rural ministers, because of inadequate training or part-time work, simply do not benefit from the type of pro-

gram herein outlined. Church groups and rural-minded folk generally must recognize the significance of such service and plan, without any condescension whatever, for the fuller participation of such ministers in all the affairs of the church and denomination, and for their further training, beginning with them where they are. A constructive and sympathetic approach in this area is a challenging and immediate need. The experience of the Franklinton (North Carolina) Institute for Rural Pastors is significant in this respect.

Denominationalism.--There is undoubtedly an increased awareness of the problems presented by the growth of denominations and cults:

(1) Perhaps one of the most significant trends in the rural church in the South has been the growth of the smaller sects. The well established denominations have not concerned themselves effectively with the poorest group of the population.

(2) A trend which is new in the South is the increased interest and activity of the Catholic Church. Never strong in this area, the Catholic Church through its National Catholic Rural Life Conference is now in process of establishing itself. Special interest is being shown in minority groups such as the Negroes. It is as yet too early to evaluate the contribution which this Church will make to the life of the rural South.

(3) Some progress has been made in overcoming the difficulties caused by denominationalism. No longer do we hear the bitter denunciation of one denomination by another. However, little of significance has been done to overcome the unfortunate conditions produced by division into denominations. In other areas the development of federated churches, community churches, larger parishes, group ministry plans, and the like, point to possible solutions which should be carefully studied.

Interracial Relations.--Indicative of a very significant trend in the rural church is the fact that in this report no special mention is made of specific problems or differences of emphasis incident to the presence of the Negro minority and its implications for the whole program of the rural church. The presence of the Negro minority does not in itself, certainly from the standpoint of Christian rural churchmanship, constitute a separate problem. The developing approach is to cultivate an awareness of the presence of the Negro as an integral part of the total picture, and accord to him a rightful place in the planning and execution of all programs for the common good.

Rural church philosophy.--A new and constructive rural church philosophy is being formulated and finding expression by the church. The basic facts are simple. They are so familiar that we have forgotten their significance:

(1) In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. The earth is God's. Man is a steward. He is responsible for the land even as a banker is responsible for the safekeeping of the depositor's money.

(2) The earth is good. The distinction between physical and spiritual as respectively good and evil is not valid. When God finished creation He looked upon His handiwork and said, "It is good." Only the evil design, the ignorance, and the laziness of man make the good gift of God serve evil purposes.

(3) By the very nature of creation labour has been ordained by God. Every person has the responsibility to apply himself diligently in producing those things which will contribute to the total welfare. In agriculture man works in closest proximity to God's continuous creative activity and labour becomes sacred as through it we cooperate with Him.

(4) The family finds the best possible opportunity to function as a unit in rural life. This gives the stability to family life which is essential in maintaining the Christian home.

Obviously this is not a complete statement of the trends in the expression of the philosophical basis of rural church work today. But it does indicate the trend of thought among those who are most concerned for a better rural church program. It can be recognized easily that if these principles are built into the life of the church people of the rural South, all of the agencies for rural betterment will have a good foundation upon which to build their programs. Without such a basis the best laid plans will not be able to do more than make temporary, superficial changes in rural life.

SUGGESTED ACTION PROGRAMS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF SOUTHERN RURAL LIFE

Point of View Relating to Southern Religious Life

There must be a clear recognition of the fact that religion plays a very important and influential part in the life of the rural people of the South and that the rural church, along with the school, is a key institution for the promotion of education for rural living.

Any proposed program of action must definitely include comprehensive long-term planning to strengthen the rural church so that it will become effective in the field of religious education and also become a functioning cooperating agency in all plans for building a Christian rural community.

As a means toward this end it must be recognized that practically all of the major denominations in their board planning and in their regional committees and boards make provision for departments of town and country life with a secretariat. These vital denominational agencies should not be ignored in any planning for rural welfare; rather, their full cooperation should be secured. It would be foolish and futile not to do so.

Church colleges, schools for training of Christian workers and theological schools, located within regions or areas particularly adapted to experimentation and demonstration in education for rural living, should be officially recognized as very valuable assets for long-time comprehensive planning to make effective the rural church as a cooperating institution.

Recruiting, Training, Support, and Placement of Church Leadership

Recruiting.--The necessary basis for any long-term policy of recruiting strong men and women for rural religious leadership must be a consciousness on the part of the whole church of the vitally important place the rural church occupies and the tremendous responsibility it has for the future of the church at large and of the Nation. A very well conceived and persistent campaign to

develop this consciousness is one of the most constructive things that departments of town and country work and mission boards could do looking toward the eventual securing of the kind of leadership the rural church needs.

This campaign might well begin with the theological seminaries with the purpose of making sure that all of their faculty members know the life of the rural church, sense the challenge of rural America and understand the heavy responsibility that rests on the rural churches. The rural church should hold a high place in the total life and thought of the seminaries and its needs and interests should be constantly kept in mind. There should be courses on rural work in every seminary and they should be as strong as any courses in the curriculum, challenging the respect of the best students. The Inter-Seminary Commission on the training of rural ministers has done notable work in interesting seminaries, but only a beginning has been made.

A similar campaign is needed to bring the whole body of ministers and denominational officials to the consciousness of the importance of the rural church and a desire to have the ablest and best young people enter rural work.

The task of the rural ministry must be made so challenging that young people can see that it calls for all of their talents. This involves not only effective presentation of the challenge but such actual changes in the set-up of the rural churches that the pastorates that are open will in reality offer as big a job as the candidates can handle and promise increasing opportunities for their developing abilities as the years go by. The best young people today as in the past are not looking for easy jobs or primarily for big incomes; they want positions that will demand all of their abilities and offer increasing opportunities as life goes on.

A continuing campaign to recruit able young people for rural religious leadership should be carried on by all available means, throughout the church but perhaps especially in the rural areas. Special literature, articles, discussion groups, and conferences are some of the means. Seminaries, colleges, agricultural schools, high schools, young people's conferences and rallies, and the rural churches are some of the best fields. Organizations of farm young people, such as the 4-H Club and the FFA, ought to be good fields in which to find some future rural religious leaders. A strong Christian Rural Youth Movement would be a rich field for recruiting the best kind of leaders for the rural churches, and its whole program would tend to develop such leaders.

One of the most effective means of recruiting would be to have men and women on fire with a passion for a better rural church presenting their message to young people in all of the fields just mentioned. Denominational boards, the Inter-Seminary Commission, and similar agencies should make such leaders constantly available.

Training of a More Effective Professional Leadership.--Many references have already been made to the need for an adequately trained rural ministry. The agencies involved in this task should include the liberal arts and agricultural colleges, the seminaries, schools for training Christian workers, and the educational agencies of the various denominations.

1. Liberal Arts and Agricultural Colleges

Seminaries should become more concerned about the preparatory work

done by pre-theological students. Recommendations should be made to guide undergraduates to choose the most helpful courses. These might be included in the entrance requirements.

More liberal arts and agricultural colleges should be encouraged to offer a "pre-theological major." According to the Joint Commission on Cooperation Between Theological Seminaries and Colleges of Agriculture, such a major should include at least one basic course (three-six semester hours) in each of the following fields: Agricultural Economics, Economics, English Composition, English Literature, History of Government, Public Speaking, Psychology, Rural Sociology, Sociology and Philosophy. In addition the student should fulfill the minimum requirements of the College of Agriculture, which include Science. Recommended electives: Education, and Foreign Language.

2. Seminaries and Schools for Training Christian Workers

Special courses on rural life and the rural church should be offered. Better yet, a rural church major could be offered. The courses which should be included would have to be determined by curriculum committees. A committee appointed by the Inter-Seminary Commission should consider this matter.

Many general courses need adaptation to help students meet needs in rural life. Instruction given in courses on religious education that might help a worker in a closely graded urban situation is impractical in dealing with rural groups where long age spans are included in classes, facilities are less adequate, and helpers are few.

Such training for rural leadership, to be effective, must provide for field work of its students in both the "concurrent" and "block" forms so as to make it possible for the student to carry on field work projects concurrently with his courses and related thereto, and also have field work experience in the form of an internship in some rural center for a semester or more. Both concurrent and block field work should be educationally supervised and be given academic credit such as is given for other graduate laboratory and research work.

Educational institutions qualified to train professional leadership for the rural church and community would need to be the recipients of special grants which would make such educational, professional service for rural churches possible. Such grants are needed: (1) to make possible the desired special rural courses; (2) to provide coordinators and educational supervisors for field work; (3) to aid in the development of the program and activities of the rural centers selected to serve as places of internship; and (4) to provide scholarships or fellowships for students deemed eligible for such periods of internship.

3. Continued Training for Those in the Active Ministry

At best, there are limits to what the seminaries and schools for training Christian workers can accomplish in three years. Continued training and guidance should be given the rural minister. Either the seminary or the denominational subdivision under which the rural minister works or a joint commission representing both could continue to give him guidance. The following types of aid would be helpful:

(1) The services of a rural church specialist who could visit and advise

with the ministers, personally, might be provided. The general pattern of the Jeanes Teacher program indicates what might be done. The guidance of laymen in promoting a better church program should be included in this project.

(2) Providing opportunities through correspondence courses and library facilties to keep in touch with the best thought and practice in rural church developments.

(3) Promoting short courses and conferences on the rural church that would be in reach of rural ministers. This should be done on an inter-denominational basis as well as denominationally.

(4) Foreign missionaries are given sabbatical years in which to better prepare themselves for their work. Rural ministers also need such periods for special study and preparation for their work.

Support and placement of rural ministers.--If the rural church is to be served efficiently three conditions must be met: First, life has its undeniable physical needs. The rural minister, in all fairness, deserves more adequate financial support than he receives ordinarily. Second, the length of pastorates must be increased. Third, the grouping of churches served must be studied and adjustments made within denominations and inter-denominationally. These problems are so interrelated that they cannot be considered apart from one another. The suggestions which follow necessarily will react upon each other:

(1) Groups of ministers should be encouraged to continue and improve present methods of supplementing the salaries of those in their groups.

(2) Laymen should be encouraged to consider the needs of the ministry of the administrative unit (Conference, Presbytery, Association, etc.) to which they belong instead of their own minister alone. The possibility of pooling the contributions to ministerial support and distributing them more nearly according to need should be studied.

(3) The possibilities of group insurance, credit cooperatives, and other forms of mutual assistance should be studied.

(4) Administrative groups and individual churches should give more consideration to the wasteful and inefficient practice of frequent moves by ministers. More adequate financial support would help reduce the frequency of moves.

(5) Emphasis should be given to long-time planning of work. If ministers and laymen could see the value of such planning and set long-time objectives, more progress would be made.

(6) The grouping of churches under a minister is determined almost solely by economic considerations. Churches should be grouped so that they could serve the country in the most efficient manner possible. Administrative bodies of denominations should carefully study the area served by those responsible to it and groupings made on the basis of efficient service. Patterns of social organization should be taken into account, so that ministers could serve "communities" rather than a heterogeneous group of churches.

(7) Wider study should be made of the possibility of interdenominational

cooperation. Much waste could be eliminated if denominational overlapping was eliminated. Federated churches, larger parishes, and group ministry plans need to be given more careful consideration. Fulfillment of such plans probably will come only after interdenominational councils of churches are formed and the ground-work is laid by them.

In any effective rural program, provision must be made for the discovery, training, and continued use of lay leadership. The whole church constituency should be considered in planning and carrying out the program of the church. Church membership carries with it the privilege and obligation of service.

The principle is well established through experience that plans and projects for rural welfare must be initiated and carried out by the rural people themselves. They want to diagnose their own situations and decide on the steps in the program. The community council or the country-wide council of churches democratically organized and directed by lay leaders is an essential procedure. Rural people do not cooperate in plans foisted upon them by professionally trained leadership from without. The unit is still the community and local church.

To accomplish this goal of training lay leadership, short-term schools for existing and prospective lay church leaders must be provided. If possible, such schools should be conducted on a cooperative basis, the students supplying such foodstuffs and services as are possible in payment for room and board. Additional grants, however, will be necessary to supplement this amount and especially to provide the teaching staff.

For the church membership as a whole, there should be cooperative inter-denominational planning in the holding of schools and institutes along such lines of adult education as will enrich the religious obligation of stewardship of the soil and the religious values of agricultural processes. Such adult educational work should be the result of long-term effort of the rural churches in making this a permanent educational and cultural experience.

Study and Research Relating To The Rural Church

Study.--A serious study needs to be entered into by all church leaders and people to make the program and work of the church effective for its great task in the rural South and to keep it abreast of the changing rural situation. The whole program of rural church work needs to be re-thought at all levels--regional, state, county, and community. Church people need to know the rural situation much more thoroughly than they do, to see all the forces that are at work, and to understand all of the agencies that are concerned about rural life and with which the churches might cooperate for a more abundant life for rural people.

The churches should be facing the total rural situation of our day with all of its new demands as realistically as many educators and many agricultural leaders are facing it, realizing the necessity of planning and carrying out a work commensurate with the need and that is adequate for the present day. In several countries where our missionaries are at work, the missionary forces and the native churches have been doing this kind of thinking about the rural situation on a national or regional basis and are getting encouraging results. Definite plans for such study should be made by church boards, councils, synods, conferences, associations, presbyteries, and other organizations.

One of the most urgently needed practical outcomes of this study is the relocating of churches so that they can serve natural rural communities within which the total social pattern of the people's lives is cast and can cooperate fully with the other community agencies such as the school.

Research.--Before adequate rural programs by the church can be planned, more information on the actual situation with which they are dealing is needed. Funds which will make possible such research will bring large dividends. We recommend that this research be done in typical selected rural areas, both white and Negro. The following subjects are suggested for research:

(1) Research should be conducted to determine who the sixteen million unchurched in the rural South are, where they are located, and why they are not affiliated with the church.

(2) There is a very special need for research on the economic basis of the rural church. (J. Merle Davis has made such studies in other lands under the auspices of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America and Canada, the reports of which are most suggestive for rural church planning.)

(3) A study of the degree to which local rural churches are functioning in the development of community life and the methods and results of such participation.

Experimentation Relating To The Rural Church

Experimentation.--We are listing below in brief form some of the fields of experimentation that the committee feels are vital in the intelligent promotion of the rural church program. We recognize that this is not a complete list but we regard these types of experimentation as essential at this state in the work of the rural church. A continuous program of experimentation is necessary as new circumstances arise.

(1) Experimentation in the field of adaptation of religious education to meet rural church needs, to include curriculum, literature, week-day religious education, with emphasis on the vacation church school, and adequate building and equipment.

(2) Experimentation in the use of the comprehensive approach in meeting total community needs. There needs to be a demonstration of how all the churches acting together within a given area may become an outstanding force in community welfare. A council of churches would afford a channel through which churches could cooperate with other agencies working in the area.

(3) Experimentation in projects of community welfare in which colleges, state and church, seminaries, and colleges for the training of Christian workers participate.

(4) Experiments should be carried out which would demonstrate the way in which churches in county-seat towns might cooperate helpfully in the interest of the rural churches and community welfare of the county. Such activities might well include county-wide young people's work, recreation, improvement in music and worship, and extension services in building Christian homes.

(5) Experiments should be carried on by the church in the interest of the economic welfare of the people, these experiments to be in cooperation with governmental and other agencies that are working toward the same ends, such as the Farm Security Administration. Experiments might be conducted in the organization of cooperatives under guidance of the Southeastern Cooperative League.

(6) Experimentation should be carried on in developing with given areas, Rural Service Centers by which rural pastors and other rural leaders may have easy access to valuable materials needed in the prosecution of their tasks, such as: government bulletins, church bulletins and pronouncements, Rural Fellowship Bulletins, and the mimeographed materials of Agricultural Missions, Inc. A rural reference file of valuable materials needed in the promotion of rural activities which can serve farmers, rural teachers, social workers, church leaders, etc., should be made available. In this connection there should be a small rural library.

Educational Promotion and Long-Time Planning

We suggest that the Southern Rural Life Council endeavor to improve the cultural and spiritual life of the people of the rural South, that the Council seek:

(1) To develop and teach great religious philosophy of rural life.

(2) In cooperation with other agencies, to set up the goal of Christian rural civilization, to define objectives and seek to envisage patterns of the new rural life, including the part the church should play in it and how.

(3) In cooperation with other agencies, to seek full justice and opportunities for rural peoples. The church should undertake active leadership in the effort for an enriched rural life and not let the movement for rural progress become merely a struggle for economic betterment, led by pressure groups, but keep it, as it ought to be, a great spiritual endeavor for a complete life. The church must come to know, appreciate, and cooperate with all programs for rural betterment.

(4) To develop a movement of folk education and culture for rural areas, whereby the people themselves will think through their own problems and work out the kind of life and culture they want for themselves. Study clubs, forums, conferences, institutes, and folk festivals, more and more controlled by the people themselves, will be some of the means of doing this. To develop the use of such methods to produce a rural church conscious of its life, with a true vision of its place and work, and with its people inspired and trained to do their part.

(5) To develop long-time cooperative planning for the rural church over wide areas, both among all the agencies within a given denomination and among all the denominations that will cooperate.

(6) To seek to interest the whole church and, as far as the church can do it, the whole Nation in the situation of the rural church and its importance for the whole life of our land, to keep church people, in city and country alike, informed in these matters, and to seek to develop ways whereby the urban people can cooperate actively in the building of a strong rural church.

"To promote Christian ideals for agriculture and rural life; to interpret the spiritual and religious values which inhere in the processes of agriculture and the relationships of rural life; to magnify and dignify the rural church; to provide a means of fellowship and cooperation among rural agencies: *Toward a Christian Rural Civilization.*"

The Christian Rural Fellowship

Toward a Christian Rural Civilization

156 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.

What It Is

The Christian Rural Fellowship is a membership organization composed of ordained and lay people interested in the quality of rural life around the world. It is non-denominational and international. Members are found in many lands. It is the only religious organization that attempts to tie together the rural leaders in all lands in the interests of a Christian rural civilization. It is in every sense a fellowship. This fellowship is provided through the Bulletin, news letters, quarterly Agricultural Missions Notes, annual meetings and local conferences. The Fellowship now has more than sixteen hundred members.

What It Does

The Christian Rural Fellowship is serving the cause of the rural church by promoting Christian ideals for agriculture and rural life; by magnifying and dignifying the rural church and the rural pastorate; by its interpretation of the spiritual and religious values which inhere in agriculture and rural life; by deepening man's sense of moral and spiritual obligation to the land; by fostering a spiritual fellowship among rural agencies, and by appealing especially to rural lay people in the interest of rural religion; by uniting Christian peoples, both at home and abroad, through fellowship and understanding to devotion to the rural church; and by providing through its monthly Bulletins creative literature which stimulates and challenges the rural church and its leaders to a new appreciation of its vital significance to the whole church, and indeed to Christian civilization. The Christian Rural Fellowship is in the above ways helping to reinterpret and restate in concrete terms the religious and spiritual significance of rural life and its institutions in today's world.

What Others Think

"The messages of these Bulletins give me deep satisfaction and I should like to possess copies from the beginning. I love rural life and am a country pastor by desire. Your Bulletin fulfills a sense of need and I would like to secure it regularly."

The whole series to date of the Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletin has been so interesting, intellectually and spiritually stimulating, I have loaned it over and over again . . . "

"Our committee feels that you and the work which you represent have come nearer to interpreting religion in terms of the every-day needs of rural people than anyone else."

How To Become a Member

Anyone interested in the services and objectives of the Christian Rural Fellowship may become a member upon application and payment of a membership fee: Subscribing $1.00; Contributing $5.00; Sustaining $10; Patron $25.

The Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletins

These Bulletins are generally recognized as the most important contributions which are being made to the religious literature of rural life. They are issued ten times a year. They are printed or photo-offset on 8½ x 11 good bond paper. The Bulletins are usually four pages, but vary from two to twenty pages in length.

How To Get a Set of the Bulletins

Available Bulletins are listed on page 16. For those desiring to begin a permanent file, Bulletins will be sent punched for 8½ by 11 inch loose-leaf binder. Thereafter, current Bulletins will be sent punched to all members who so request. For prices and discount see bottom of page 16.

List of Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletins*

No.	Title
1	The Holy Earth, by Liberty Hyde Bailey
3	For the Land's Sake, by C. F. Clayton
7	The Faith Man Shares With Beast and Tree, by Warren H. Wilson
8	Spiritual and Religious Values in Rural Art, by Betty Eckhardt
9	Farm Tenancy and the Christian Conscience, by Brooks Hays
10	Rural and Urban Philosophies, by O. E. Baker
15	The Larger Parish and Rural Reconstruction Unit, by Malcolm Dana
18	Rev. J. A. McDonald — The Soil Builder, by Angus McDonald
19	A Plain Farmer's Religion, by Amy Atwater
21	Putting Culture Into Agriculture, by Erland Nelson
22	The Rural Church and the Tenant Farmer, by Garland Reid Stafford
23	Reconstructing Rural Life in China, by Fu-liang Chang
25	The Rural Church in Iowa, by W. A. WinterStein
26	Ethics of Land Tenancy, by Arthur Raper
27-1	Agriculture as a Way of Life, The Jewish Point of View, by Gabriel Davidson
27-2	Agriculture as a Way of Life, The Catholic Point of View, by John La Farge
27-3	Agriculture as a Way of Life, The Protestant Point of View, by Mark A. Dawber
27-4	Agriculture as a Way of Life, The Point of View of the Church of the Brethren, by Charles D. Bonsack
27-5	Agriculture as a Way of Life, The Point of View of a Farm Woman, by Elizabeth MacDonald
29	Is there a Relation between the Quality of People and the Quality of the Land on which They Live? by Ralph W. Gwinn
30	Religious Significance in Rural Handicrafts, by Mary G. Lacy
33	The Kingdom of God in a Rural Community, by Frank W. Price
34	Agriculture and Vocation, by John La Farge
35	The Significance of Land in the Old Testament, by Julius A. Bewer
36	Nature Speaks of God, by Charles D. Bonsack
37	The Rural Church, by C. J. Galpin
38	Disadvantaged Classes in Rural Life, by Dwight Sanderson
39	The City Church's Stake in Rural Religion, by Robert Grenville Armstrong
43	The Rural Family and Its Significance to Organized Religion by O. E. Baker, 20 pages including 8 full-page graphs
44	Rural Poverty and Rural Morale, by Thomas Alfred Tripp
45	Reflections in a Graveyard of Civilization, by W. C. Lowdermilk
46	Enduring Values in Rural Life. Quotations
47	The Christian Rural Fellowship Looks Ahead, by Ralph Williamson
48	The Rural Church and World Christian Unity, by Hermann N. Morse and Mark A. Dawber
49	Effective Techniques in Developing Unity and Co-operation among Rural Churches, by Mark Rich
50	Cooperation and Religion, by M. M. Coady
51	A Rural Challenge to the Protestant Church, by Dan R. Davis
52	Ministering to the Dispossessed in Rural Communities, by Martin Schroeder
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54	The Church in China's Rural Reconstruction, by T. H. Sun
55	The Rural Minister and the Country Church, by Charles Josiah Galpin and Martin Schroeder
56	The Kingdom of God and Rural Reconstruction, by Arthur Mosher
57	The Kind of Rural Church I Would Like to Have in My Community, by Mrs. Calvin Perdue
58	The Religious Needs of The Village Family, by William G. Mather
59	The Characteristics of a Christian Rural Community, The Hubbardsville-East Hamilton Community, New York, by Stanley E. Skinner
60	Rural People and World Peace, by Henry C. Taylor
61	The Characteristics of a Christian Rural Community, The Big Lick Community, Tennessee, by Eugene Smathers
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78	Church and Community, by Thomas Jesse Jones
79	Spiritual Development Through Neighborhood Fellowship Groups, by Ralph L. Williamson
80	A Service of Dedication to the Cause of Rural Life, by Edward K. Ziegler
81	Underprivileged Farm Families and the Christian Conscience, by R. W. Hudgens
82	Land and Human Welfare, by J. M. Ormond, et al.
83	The Rural Church and Rural Life in the South, from Report of Southern Rural Life Conference

*Single copy, 5 cents. 20% discount on orders over 50 cents. Postage paid.